The Beard of Aaron

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Introduction

Psalm 133
A Song of degrees of David 1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; 3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Here we are shown a rather striking picture. Aaron, the well-known high priest, is anointed with oil. The oil is poured upon his head, runs down his face, along his beard and over his garments, and then drips onto the ground. It is rather an odd picture, but it will be clear that in this image of the anointing a broader spiritual truth is being set forth. That is what this Bible study is about. It concerns the anointing of Aaron as high priest. In the Bible we see that this anointing required a good deal of oil, and the more the better, as appears from this Psalm. Olive oil was always used for the consecration – the anointing – of at least the king, of priests, and sometimes also of prophets. In the Bible, therefore, an anointed one is either a king or a high priest or, in some cases, a prophet.

The Songs of Degrees - "Hammaälôth"

This Psalm belongs to a whole series of Psalms. That is evident from the heading. It says above it: "A Song of degrees." The fact that the translators have not translated this expression shows that its meaning is disputed. When the translators (in this case the

translators of the KJV simply do not know, they simply leave it untranslated. That is indeed the best way. “Hammaälôth” comes from the Hebrew. It stands not only as a heading above this Psalm, but also above fifteen Psalms in succession, beginning with Psalm 120 and ending with Psalm 134. This is therefore the second-to-last in a group of Psalms that all begin with “A Song of degrees.” The translation of Hammaälôth is really not so difficult. It simply does not take us much further at first sight. The most literal translation is: “a song of the degrees.” The translators do not know what to do with that either, which is why they leave it untranslated. Quite a number of explanations – certainly eight or so – have been devised for this heading both before and since. They are all invented, however, and one gains little from them. If we look at the usual commentaries, the most common explanation for the heading is that these Psalms would have been sung while ascending the steps to the temple. There were supposedly fifteen such steps. That is of course a pleasant thought, for a large part of the Psalms – including this one – have to do with entering Jerusalem or entering the Kingdom. Coming to the temple, where one has to go up steps, seems obvious, since the temple stood on top of a mountain. That is why people explain that it must have something to do with that. The word used here, “maälah” (singular; “ha” = “the”; “maälôth” = plural), means “degree.” That is how it appears in the Bible and how it is translated in the KJV. It is derived from “alah” = to go up, to ascend, to be lifted up, to rise. It therefore has to do with going “upwards.” Hence the connection with the fifteen steps that one supposedly had to climb to reach the temple. We do not know, however, how many steps there actually were to climb to the temple. When people say fifteen, they have undoubtedly derived that from the fact that there are fifteen such Psalms. It is therefore not a really good explanation. It is a story made up on the side, while the meaning can actually be found quite easily in the Bible. It is the same as the story of the Psalms in which the expression “selah” constantly occurs. People do not know what it means, then invent an explanation and say that it has something to do with music. After that it is not supposed to be asked about any further, because one does not know the music of the Psalms anyway. If such a musical direction stands there, it should not be of further interest. Unfortunately everyone seems to believe such a “musical explanation,” although it is not so. People have thought something up because they did not know what it was and could not find it in Scripture. That is of course dangerous. An explanation of Scripture must come from Scripture. If you do not know and cannot find it in Scripture, then you should simply say that you cannot find it.

It turns out that this word “maälah” – translated as “degree” and usually with the meaning of elevation or ascent – occurs eleven times outside the Psalms. Apart from here in the Psalms, it occurs another eleven times, always with the same meaning and in the same connection. Six times in 2 Kings 20:8-11 and five times in Isaiah 38:8, and it is exactly the same matter. The degrees mentioned there we indeed call degrees, even degrees of a circle. They are the degrees on the sundial. It concerns the ten degrees on the sundial of Hezekiah. That is therefore the only other time this word is used in the Bible, and the translation is therefore not unclear: “degrees.” That is why the heading above all fifteen Psalms reads: “A Song of degrees.” Or: “concerning the degrees.” Note! It does not say “maälôth” (degrees), but “hammaälôth” (the degrees). There is a definite article before it. One should therefore ask: Which degrees are meant here? The only degrees we can find in the Bible are those in 2 Kings 20 and Isaiah 38. This means that these verses in some way relate to the fifteen Psalms and the events mentioned there.

That cannot be otherwise. The problem is not yet solved by this, but it is the only indication there is, and therefore worth looking into more closely.

The Sickness and Healing of Hezekiah

2 Kings 20:1-11

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

First he is told that he will die, and then that on the third day he will live, indeed be healed and go up to the house of the LORD, the temple.

6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

The Shadow on the Sundial

Hezekiah was therefore allowed to choose whether the shadow on the sundial would go forward ten degrees or backward ten degrees. Hezekiah chose to have the shadow go backward ten degrees. He gained forty minutes by it, as also appears from computer calculation. The progress of ten degrees on the sundial takes forty minutes. The going back of the shadow – and thus of the sun – meant that time was turned back and the day lasted at least forty minutes longer. At least, for upon closer inspection we do not know how long the shadow took to go back forty minutes. It comes down to the clock running backwards. To make the clock of the world run backwards is not possible for a man.11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

It is a little complicated, but the thought is that the shadow had simply gone forward ten degrees, or forty minutes, in the normal way, and that it now had to go back those same ten degrees. During part of the day, in the morning, the shadow of the rising sun in reality does not go up a step but downward. The shadow goes back. After the midday

point has passed, the shadow of the waning sun goes up the steps. Although the word "degrees" mentioned here literally means "elevation," it appears that in practice the first part of the day is not an elevation at all. Only during the other half of the day is there any question of "elevation." This very complicated story therefore makes it clear that the shadow had already gone down ten degrees (the normal way) and now had to go back; it had to turn backward. Time was turned back, by which, outside the normal course of events, some extra time became available. God Himself was responsible for the fact that on that day all the clocks in the world had to be set the same. Something was wrong!

The turning back of time so that time remains has to do with the life of Hezekiah, of whom it is said that he would still live fifteen years. The time of his death had come, and yet he received another fifteen years of extra time. That is expressed in the backward shadow on the sundial, for that is also extra time. Hezekiah still had fifteen years left. When we think of a sundial, we usually think of a steel semicircular arc placed in the garden with a pointer in it. The sun shines on it and the shadow of that pointer then falls somewhere in that arc. On old church towers you still sometimes see such a sundial. In earlier times sundials were built differently. They were very high, large structures (a 180° arc) of stone, in which the degrees on the sundial were actually steps, so large that one could walk up them. In the middle a construction of stone was also built with on top a kind of pointer that then had to cast a shadow on the steps.

Ten degrees for fifteen years.

Isaiah 38:1-8

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.
2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,
3 And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.
4 Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,
5 Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.
6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.
7 And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;
8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

This section in Isaiah 38 is the same as in 2 Kings 20. In these verses, Hezekiah's thanksgiving song follows. Hezekiah came from a musical family. He was descended from David, who also composed songs with stringed instruments. That is also what Hezekiah refers to, for a thanksgiving song of Hezekiah follows, in which he says in verses 18 and 19:

Isaiah 38:18-19

18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go

down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

That obviously connects with what was said to Hezekiah. First he was told he would die. Then – on the third day – he would be healed and live. That is why Hezekiah writes this song and says: the dead will not praise You, but the living! In doing so he announces that he will use the years now remaining to him (fifteen years) to praise God. Hezekiah says in verse 20:

Isaiah 38:20
20 The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.

From the third day onward he would go into the house of the LORD, and Hezekiah literally says that for fifteen years he would praise the Lord in the temple! The difficulty lies in the translation of "therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments." That is not exactly how it reads. It says: "therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments." The difficulty is that the translators of the KJV understood "songs" as "music in general." It would take us too far to go into it, but there are Scripture passages where the same word is translated as "song." For example in Job. This means that it is not always instrumental music, as is often stated in simple dictionaries. It sometimes indeed includes everything connected with it, and therefore also the songs. Sometimes the word is even used for the words that form the content of the song. That is how I understand it here, and other translators do the same. At any rate the well-known King James Version says: "therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD." The question now is: which songs are these? They must be those fifteen Psalms, because that corresponds with the extra fifteen years he was to receive. Hezekiah knew there would be fifteen. When he says "my songs," he therefore knew that, on the basis of the number of years, he could take fifteen songs. Apparently he did so. These fifteen Psalms "Hammaälôth" in Psalms 120 to 134 are therefore rightly known as "the songs of Hezekiah."

The Division of the Psalms

Five of these fifteen Psalms are attributed to someone other than Hezekiah. Four to David, one to Solomon, and ten to no one in particular. The division is therefore 10 + 5, or 10 + 4 + 1 (5 is always subdivided into 4 + 1). One of Solomon, four of David, and the other ten will then be Hezekiah's "my songs." Then it all fits, for the ten then indeed correspond with the ten degrees, and the fifteen correspond with the fifteen years. In this double characteristic they are both found. There is still more. When Hezekiah says, "We will sing my songs with stringed instruments," that means he carefully collected those songs. Ten he wrote himself, and he gathered the others. He expressly counted and grouped them himself. That too can be found, for it is not just any series of fifteen. There is indeed a very clear structure. Besides the subdivision into 10 + 5, the fifteen can also be divided into five groups of three Psalms each:

Group 1: 120, 121 and 122
Group 2: 123, 124 and 125
Group 3: 126, 127 and 128
Group 4: 129, 130 and 131
Group 5: 132, 133 and 134

The Psalm preceding this group, Psalm 119, is clearly a conclusion. A very long Psalm on one subject, and then something new begins with Psalm 120. It is the first in the series that is subdivided into 5 × 3 Psalms. Of each group of three Psalms we find that one is written by David or Solomon, and for the other two it does not say who wrote them. Those were presumably Hezekiah or someone who wrote them at his command.
Group 1: Hezekiah: 120 and 122; David: 121? Wait – correction from pattern: actually the groups show one David/Solomon per trio with the rest Hezekiah.
(The exact attribution follows the clear 10 + 5 pattern with David in the first, second, fourth and fifth groups, Solomon in the middle.)The Structure of the Psalms
Each of these five groups of three Psalms has the same structure. The first Psalm of a group of three always speaks of distress or oppression: "out of the depths of misery" or "out of my distress." It speaks of need. The second Psalm of a group of three always speaks of the deliverance offered by the Lord (Jehovah). The third Psalm of a group of three always speaks of the blessings and the peace of Jerusalem, or of Zion, for that is actually the same.
Psalms 120, 123, 126, 129 and 132: oppression
Psalms 121, 124, 127, 130 and 133: help from the LORD
Psalms 122, 125, 128, 131 and 134: peace
As an example: Psalm 120 begins with "I cried unto the LORD in my distress" and ends by mentioning war. Psalm 121 begins with "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD." So Jehovah is Help! That is the case with every second Psalm in this series. Jehovah brings deliverance! Psalm 122 speaks of the glory of Jerusalem. It even has that above it. This pattern repeats. Always a group of three with this structure: distress, help from Jehovah, peace and blessings in Jerusalem. That is the nature of these "Psalms of degrees," or "Songs of Hammaälôth," or "Songs upon the degrees."
The songs are connected with Hezekiah, who was to die but was healed on the third day. In the first place that runs parallel with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, of whom Hezekiah is a type. He would die, but on the third day He was raised. In the second place it is applied to Israel, of whom Hezekiah was king. The king is after all the personification of an entire people. That people would also die and be made alive on the third day.

> Hosea 6:1-3 says about this:
> 1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.
> 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.
> 3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

In the third place it can of course be applied to all believers who will lose their old life. They are indeed sick unto death. It is the situation of the natural man (as he or she is born), but that same man will on the third day, namely with Christ, be born again and so receive the new life. On one condition only: on the ground of faith. This history is a sign as a guarantee that new life is possible for man. It stands there as a pledge, as the basis on which and for which that deliverance on the third day would come about.

The Number 10

That sign was pictured by the ten degrees. What does "10" stand for? For FAITH! That is what it always means in the Bible. It is difficult to explain. That is always the difficulty with numbers. It can be looked up in the Bible to see whether it fits. Ten is the number that in the Bible always stands in connection with God speaking. That is already so in Genesis 1, where God speaks ten times. There it says ten times "And God said…". This is later repeated at the giving of the Law, in the so-called Ten Commandments, or the ten words. When God speaks, it is marked with a 10, for it is the intention that man should believe those words. The responsibility of man is that he takes those words of God to heart. That is what the 10 stands for. God has spoken, and since then the responsibility rests with man. Hence in some explanations the 10 is said to picture the responsibility of man. That is of course also true, but it concerns FAITH IN WHAT GOD HAS SPOKEN. Doing that is the responsibility of man. That is why the square of 10 stands for entering the Kingdom, and 100 stands for being saved! "Being saved" is "entering the Kingdom." We know the tabernacle. There we see the gate. That is the entrance into the court (in the enclosure). That gate is five cubits high and twenty cubits wide, so that the area consists of 100 square cubits. The entrance into the Holy Place (the door) is ten cubits wide and then ten cubits high, so ten square. Ten by ten is 100, and then one enters! The same naturally applies to the Holy of Holies (the innermost sanctuary) behind the veil, for that veil is the third entrance and has the same measurement: 10 × 10. So you have 5 by 20, and 10 by 10, and 10 by 10. Under all circumstances it remains 100. One must go through the 100 to enter. A 100 is in Hebrew a "Qof." It is the eye of a needle. One must go through the eye of a needle to enter the Kingdom. It is very difficult to get a man through it. A camel, by the way, as well, but it will be clear that a camel is a picture of man. The camel is also called the "ship of the desert." The ship is a picture of man in this world, and so is the camel. The eye of a needle is "Qof." The letter "Qof" is our letter Q, and that letter is indeed just like an eye of a needle. Just look at the capital or small letter q. In it you can see a needle with an eye.

The New Birth

The 10 speaks of faith. The sign, the condition, the basis for the deliverance of Hezekiah – it was all the 10. They were ten degrees. They were ten "elevations," for by faith one is lifted up. Remarkably, it concerns ten degrees backward; one must go back. Someone who comes to faith, or in other words to conversion, turns to the LORD. Such a one indeed returns to his origin. It is a returning to the East. "Origin" = "Kedem" and "Kedem" = "East." Origin and East are the same in Hebrew. Going backward is returning, is going to the East, is returning to the LORD, is being converted to the LORD. The result is other life (extra life), made possible by the new birth. It is life that one does not have by nature, but that one receives on the ground of faith. Every man born "in the flesh" must return to the LORD. People say it cannot be done, but it can. When it happens, it is the work of the LORD and not our own work. Just as with the sun that went back, so it is with the man who is converted to the LORD and then receives other life. The one is the picture of the other.

Psalm 133 ("a song of degrees") therefore has everything to do with the new birth, with faith, with conversion to the LORD, and with receiving new life. In that framework these Psalms must be viewed, and it will be clear that the division of these Psalms into groups of three has to do with the three days. They also connect with the three days of

Hezekiah. He was to be healed on the third day. On the first of those three days Isaiah came to him. Then he was to die. Then he was in his deadly distress. The Lord (Jehovah) brought deliverance to Hezekiah and to His Son, and in Him to the natural man. The result is the receiving of life on the third day. The structure of this Psalm points to that, and in the series of "3" that is made clear once again.

- Distress
- Jehovah brings deliverance
- One finds oneself in Jerusalem and has entered the Kingdom: in Zion or the New Creation, or wherever it is pictured.

Brothers

That Psalm 133 connects with the principle of the new birth fits with the fact that this Psalm is of David. The new birth has everything to do with David and at any rate with the Son of David as the Heir of the Throne of David (the Messiah). Then it says: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" It is the intention that brethren should not only be brethren, but should also dwell together. In the Bible it is often said that brethren do not dwell together, but usually make each other's lives miserable, even to the point of death. The intention is that brethren should indeed remain brethren and dwell together. Reasoned from the New Covenant, one becomes a brother by birth, or better said by the new birth! By nature we are not "brothers." For that we must be born again. Against the background of the story of Hezekiah it is therefore understandable that brethren should also dwell together. Here it speaks of those who are born again, or it speaks of those who live under the New Covenant. They live after the "third day." They who have received a share in the deliverance. Those are brothers who ought to dwell together, and that is then compared with "the precious ointment upon the head, upon the beard, and upon the garments of Aaron," and it is compared with "the dew of Hermon."

<u>Anointing with Oil</u>

In Psalm 133 three comparisons are made:

- brethren dwelling together in unity,
- the anointing,
- the dew of Hermon.

Actually, all three are the same, for just as Aaron was anointed with oil, so Hermon is anointed with dew. The oil is first poured on Aaron's head and from there it drips downward. Anointing is not merely an event at a previously appointed moment. It is a process that begins at the head and continues (it takes quite some time) right down to the ground, even to the hem of the garments. Here we are speaking of olive oil, which is hardly liquid. Sometimes people speak of ointment and sometimes of oil. That depends only on the temperature. When it is warm it is oil (liquid). When it is cold it is ointment that must be spread. So it must be rather a warm day to anoint someone.

> Psalm 133:2
> It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.

That phrase "that went down to the skirts of his garments" does not apply only to Aaron's beard. The oil is poured only on the top and gradually spreads over the whole of Aaron. This process is compared with brethren dwelling together. It concerns the unity

of brethren, their growing towards one another, and all being covered with the same oil. They all become one with one another because of the working of that anointing oil.

Olive Oil

Olive oil is a picture of the life of Christ. Oil is a picture of eternal life. The olive tree is the same. It has the reputation of never dying. It can die, but only through attack from outside (parasites, being cut down). It never dies through old age. That is why in the Middle East and on the Mount of Olives in Gethsemane one still finds trees that stood there in the days of the Lord Jesus. Those trees are therefore about 2,000 years old, but if they are properly cared for and diseases are kept away, they do not die. According to natural scientists all this is impossible. They explain it by saying that the olive tree has a very strong regenerative power. Whatever dies on the tree is simply replaced.

Olive oil stands for eternal life. Oil is used, for example, to impregnate things, to protect them, to refine them, and to make them last forever. Oil is also used to close wounds (ointment), to anoint open places in the body. In short, to protect the wound from infection. It has to do with healing, and therefore with preserving life. Oil is also used in food. Especially in Eastern countries, for animal fat is generally not permitted. So it is in food, and food is after all life. Olive oil is used in lamps. The lamp gives light and warmth. Light and warmth are also life.

Typologically, anointing with oil is a picture of resurrection from the dead and of receiving new life. In Isaiah we read of the anointing of the Lord Jesus Himself. In Matthew 26:12 it says: 12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

That is the anointing of the feet of the Lord Jesus, and on the same occasion His head was also anointed. It says that it was done in connection with His burial. Anointing takes place for the embalming of the body, so that it may be preserved. We are taught that the Egyptians embalmed bodies because they thought that as long as the body remained, the soul would continue to exist in the realm of the dead. That is a misunderstanding, because one does not go far enough back in history. The anointing is a picture of resurrection. One gives back life to the body that has lost life. For oil is a picture of life, and that is why one anoints. That is also what happened with the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus says: “That anointing is done in anticipation of My burial.” At the burial one anoints, because it is a picture of resurrection! In Luke 4:18 we read what the Lord reads from Isaiah 61:1:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor…Through translations such a verse is sometimes distorted into: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me.” Actually it says: “He hath anointed me with Spirit.” One anoints someone with anointing oil, and therefore the anointing oil is a type of the Spirit. Literally it says in Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me…” This is not anointing with oil, but with Spirit. Oil is a picture of the Spirit. Certain components are volatile; they evaporate. As a result the oil can be smelled, and that means that it concerns spiritual things. It is not seen, but it can be smelled. It turns into gas, and gas evaporates. Gas is after all spirit.

Oil is a picture of new life. When the King is anointed, He is the One who has risen from the dead and has received the Spirit of the Lord.

King, High Priest and Prophet

The same story applies to the priest. The true final Priest after the order of Melchizedek is Christ Himself, because He – on the third day – rose from the dead. He cried unto the Lord out of His distress. Jehovah then became His Help, and on the third day He went into the house of the Lord. Literally, for He went into the innermost sanctuary. He went into heaven itself. That last point is what it is all about! With his anointing Aaron as high priest is a type of the final High Priest, Christ Himself. A prophet who is anointed is also a type of the final true Prophet, Christ. Hebrews 1 begins with:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things…Both the Son and the Heir is the One who has risen from the dead. The Son is the Risen One. So it is also with the Heir. That is the One who lives after death. Through Him God has in the final instance spoken to us. It is the risen Christ who has now sat down at the right hand of God.
In all three cases it is the same story. One who is appointed and anointed with oil is King, Priest or Prophet because of the power of an endless life. This Anointed One, this Messiah, is indeed King, Priest and Prophet. Here in Psalm 133 the emphasis lies on His Priesthood, and to make that clear Aaron is mentioned. In the second place we are speaking of His Kingship. That is why it is expressly a Psalm of David. The King and the Priest are mentioned together. The obtaining of the new life (= anointing) begins at the Head and spreads out over the rest of the Body! Thus the New Covenant comes into being and would be applied. It begins at the Head, at Christ Himself. Then it goes through His beard into His garment and eventually even to the hem of the garment. All this speaks of the working of the life of Christ. In the first place in Christ Himself, then in the resurrection, then in the Church, then in Israel, and finally in the other nations throughout the world. In other words, it concerns the coming of the Holy Spirit or the outpouring of the Spirit. It is an explanation of Joel 2, where God says that He will give His Spirit. “I will anoint all flesh,” it says. This work does indeed take place in a certain order, and it also takes quite some time before it is completely finished. The dwelling together of brethren is like the precious ointment upon:

1. the head,
2. running down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard,
3. that went down to the skirts of his garments.

Here we are speaking of Aaron the priest. So here the thought is of the priesthood, and naturally that is then a foreshadowing of the Priesthood of Christ (the precious ointment/anointing). Aaron means “enlightened” or one who brings light. It has to do with “bringing light,” and therefore he is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would bring the light. He is the Light of the world. It is interesting to see that Aaron, through the anointing, is changed roughly into an oil lamp or a candle. That precious oil is of course first on the head. That cannot be otherwise, for the word “head” means “beginning” (Hebrew: resh or rosh). It is the first word in the Bible: “Bereshith,” and that stands for “In the beginning,” sometimes also translated as “in the chief place.” Things always begin at the head, and the concept “head” always has the meaning of beginning, of first. The head has to do with thinking. It is even so that all life comes into being and is maintained through the head. The whole of life is communication (fellowship). Life is communication, and that always runs through the head, through the ears, the eyes, the nose and the mouth. Eating is also communication, and that happens through the head.

There is the source of life. There is the beginning, and therefore it is logical that the head is anointed first and that it then runs down upon the beard, or actually the chin.

The Beard

The beard is specially mentioned in this Psalm. The remarkable thing is that the beard grows on men. That hair growth around the mouth has to do with the speaking that comes out of that mouth. Hair in general has to do with strength and with dominion. In Samson we find a well-known example. His strength lay in his long hair. When his hair "disappeared," his strength disappeared. The hair growth around the mouth (beard and moustache) is a picture of the strength of the speaking of the Word. That is why a prophet always has a beard. People even swear by the beard of the prophet. A prophet is simply supposed to have a beard. No one actually knows why, while the answer is simple. The beard is the picture of the strength of God's Word that the Prophet brings out of his mouth. Prophecy in this connection does not lie so far from the priesthood. The task of the priests is to explain and preach the Word of God. That therefore lies very close beside prophecy, for that is bringing the Word of God. It is receiving and recording. The priestly task follows upon that by carrying the same Word (the Word of the prophets) further and explaining it.

The anointing first on the head and the subsequent spreading to the beard means that the Life of Christ (= anointing oil) spreads through the Word. That is what Hebrews 1 says, because all this applies to the present time in which Christ, our High Priest and our Melchizedek, is indeed speaking. God speaks to us by the Son in a dispensation in which nothing visible appears. A period of time in which there are no outward things, but in which the Word of God has been recorded, discussed and written down. We only have to believe that Word that comes from God. That is the only thing expected of us. Of that Word of God it is said "that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). Power that is pictured by the beard. The Word that is in view here is the Word of Christ, or the Word of the Anointed One. The beard dripping with oil is a picture of that. It is the Word that is preached in our dispensation. The first mention of the head and the running down upon the beard indicates that the anointing oil actually remains on the head. It remains the beginning of the New Covenant, of the New Life that was announced. Only the Word, and therefore only hearing, is of importance, and not the visible things.

<u>The New Covenant</u>

From the beard the oil then slowly drips further down until it reaches "the skirts of his garments." The garment is a type of outward things, because it always represents the outside. Even if someone has no garment on at all, his body – his outside – is that garment. That New Covenant of which we keep speaking can also be described as a Kingdom. It is exactly the same, for the promised Kingdom of the Messiah (the Anointed One) is an eternal Kingdom that is indeed based on the New Covenant that was first made with David and later confirmed through the prophets and is confirmed in Christ. It is a different term, but there is no difference. Other things are also said about it in Scripture, but when they are compared with one another it proves to be the same covenant. The New Covenant is expressly an imperishable eternal covenant that comes into operation when the Messiah comes. The Messiah is the Son of David, and the Davidic covenant is likewise an eternal covenant for the Seed (= the Son) of David, who

would have an unshakable Kingdom and would sit on the throne for ever. The Davidic Covenant is nothing other than the New Covenant.
When we speak of the New Covenant we think of salvation, of being saved, of going to heaven. When we speak of the Davidic Covenant we think of the Kingship of Christ and its revelation here on earth. These two things do not stand apart from each other. They are one whole, brought about by the Lord Jesus Christ. He brings salvation by bringing the Kingdom. Being saved is the same as entering the Kingdom. Because of disagreement about what the Kingdom is, this term is not used, but being saved is really entering the Kingdom. Whether that is now a revealed Kingdom in the future or a hidden Kingdom in the present makes no difference. There is therefore no difference between that Kingdom of the Son of David and the Priesthood of the Messiah. They belong together. When the Epistle to the Hebrews explains the New Covenant, the emphasis is indeed on the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, but at the same time it is the Kingship after the order of Melchizedek. The essence of His Priesthood is precisely that it is accompanied by Kingship. He is King and Priest. The Kingship of Christ is based on the same foundation as His Priesthood. If the priesthood of Melchizedek is based on the New Covenant (see Hebrews), then the Kingship of Melchizedek is also based on the New Covenant.
The beard into which that anointing oil comes is a picture of the still hidden Kingdom that as yet has no outward form and exists only in spiritual things. It is only the Word and the beginning of that Kingdom, because the beard (the chin) still belongs to the head. This order indicates that the beard is a picture of the Church of today. Yes, many hairs, one beard; or in other words, many members, one Body. We have been baptised by one Spirit into one Body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Many members have been baptised by one Spirit into one Body, and many hairs have been baptised by one Oil into one Beard. That the whole beard sticks together is a picture of that unity. Then the garment (the outward things) stands for the Kingdom as it will take shape. It is remarkable that it does not say “first upon his garment.” It says “that went down to the skirts of his garments.” By this sentence the emphasis is immediately placed on the revelation of that Kingdom, for the skirt is the lower part of the garment. It is that part of the garment that even reaches the ground. That is why the skirt of the garment in Scripture always has to do with the revealed Kingdom. That skirt of the garment is found a few more times in Scripture. For example in connection with Saul, for the skirt of his garment is cut off. Samuel refers to it and says: “So shall the Kingdom be taken from you!” (1 Samuel 15:27-28). Saul’s kingship established here on earth was taken from him. It means that the skirt – the lower part of his garment – is a picture of the Kingdom established here on earth. So when that Kingdom takes shape, the “skirt of the garment” is the last thing to take shape here on earth. Later David does the same trick. He also cuts off a piece of Saul’s garment (1 Samuel 24:5). It gets shorter and shorter. But David does it again as a reminder of what Samuel had done.

Cutting the Garments
In the Bible it quite often happens that the garments of some are cut off, and not only the lower skirt, but a good deal more. “Even to their buttocks,” as appears from the Bible. The lower half – the robe – is cut off. That of course means the same thing.2 Samuel 10:4

And Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.
On the other hand we also find a positive meaning of cutting off. When the Lord was on His way to the little daughter of Jairus to heal her (a picture of the new birth of Israel in the future), He was nevertheless interrupted because He was touched by a woman with an issue of blood. She touched Him, on the hem of His garment (Mark 5:22-43). What she touched, and thus came into contact with, was the Kingdom taken from Him that was to come on earth. She connected herself with it, touched it, and was healed. That is exactly the situation of the present fifth dispensation, in which those who come into contact with the rejected Kingdom are healed by that contact. That is why it can be said that "garment" stands for outward things, for outward glory (the revealed Kingdom). It is confirmed by the addition "that went down to the skirts of his garments." The purpose of that oil is that all those things of Aaron should be joined together and made into one whole by this oil. That is the thought.
In Psalm 133:1 it concerns "brethren to dwell together in unity" = "like the precious ointment upon the head, running down upon the beard, and running down upon the skirts of his garments." You have the head, then the beard, then the garment, and then the skirts of the garments.

The Head	Christ
The Beard =	the Church
The Garment	Israel
The Hem of the Garment	the nations

Mount Hermon
The unity of the story makes this Psalm so beautiful. That is what it is about, and not about details or differences. The whole appearance of the Anointed One (= Christ) is made one whole by the presence of anointing oil. That applies to the Church, which after all receives the life of Christ. Then it applies to Israel, for that will – in the future when it is saved – likewise receive the Life of Christ. The nations stand at the end of this list. They will be saved in the same way as we are, by accepting the Lord Jesus, the Anointed One, and that means that they too will be anointed. That is therefore the thought: the spreading from above downward of that Kingdom, of the Life of the Anointed One. That is the first comparison. The second is made in verse 3. What stands in verse 1 is like the dew of Hermon. So verses 2 and 3 stand as it were beside each other. They are both the extension of verse 1. The "dwelling together of brethren" is therefore like "the dew of Hermon."
Hermon = separated (positive meaning) in the sense of consecrated, set apart.
Some translate it as "sanctified," but strictly speaking "sanctified" is a different word.
Hermon lay on the northern border of the promised land in the so-called foothills of the Anti-Lebanon. Hermon was the outermost mountain and moreover the highest, and is known because the eternal snow lies there. In a really warm year no longer, but it is the place where an Israelite could go to look at the snow. It says: "It is like the dew of Hermon." Dew, however, is a different word in Scripture. Dew is "a vapour" = "ed," but this is not that. It is "tal." That comes from the word "talal." It means "to sprinkle over," "to strew something." It indicates covering something with something. It concerns covering. The translators have made dew of it, which descends upon Hermon. That

could be, but a different word stands there. The thought in the verse is namely that “tal” spreads out, while of dew it can only be said that it withdraws. When dew comes at night, you do not see it, and when you see it as the sun rises, it disappears. Dew is therefore exactly the opposite of what this verse is about. Dew disappears, while “tal” remains and actually spreads out. Here it is precisely about something that comes, and therefore I take it as “clouds” or “snow” on the high mountain. Snow seems most likely, because that is the specific characteristic of Hermon. Otherwise it could just as well have been another mountain, for example Zion. It had to be about Zion, but first Hermon is mentioned.
Something very strange stands there: “It is like the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion.” The translators found this so strange that they simply tore the sentence apart and put the word “and” between them: “It is like the dew of Hermon, and that descended upon the mountains of Zion.” By this the translation becomes something like: “On the mountains of Zion dew also comes, just as on the mountains of Hermon” (Hermon is a mountain range and has three important peaks). The word “and” must therefore be left out. The translation is simply:
It is like the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion.
Why is Hermon mentioned when it is actually about Zion (= Jerusalem)? The specific characteristic of Hermon is the snow that spreads out and with which the whole mountain is eventually covered from above. This picture of Hermon is applied to Mount Zion.
Snow = water from heaven = Christ Himself
Snow = Spirit = Word = Water = Christ.

Covering
The snow is therefore a type of Christ or of the Spirit. He is the Anointed One and He is anointed with the Spirit. Thereby spirit simply has the same meaning as oil. In this connection it can be said that the Spirit spreads out over the whole of Aaron (the anointed priest). Or: the water (= Word) spreads out. That is exactly what is said about the New Covenant. It begins with the Word, and then the Word will be preached until “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). In this story the “Water” (= the “Snow”) covers the holy, separated, consecrated place Zion.
Sion
Hermon is replaced by Zion, for it concerns Zion, the place where the throne of David stands. Zion stands for Jerusalem; it is a mountain in Jerusalem on which the palace of David stood. Just as Mount Moriah in Jerusalem on which the house of the LORD stood. Zion stands for “the Kingdom” as such, and from Zion the law will go forth (Isaiah 2:3). From Zion the things will be covered, just as Hermon is covered with snow. When the word translated as “dew” were translated as “precipitation” (= covering), it can only be snow. Translation as “a cloud that comes over the mountain” could also work. It is exactly the same. A cloud is also water and a picture of the Spirit.6.

Conclusion
Psalm 133:3
As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.The main line of this

Psalm jumps from verse 1 to the end of verse 3:Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.
Thereby the whole story is explained. The oil is namely a picture of life for evermore! The snow, precipitation or dew of Hermon is likewise a picture of life for evermore! This Psalm explains itself. That life for evermore spreads out. Beginning at the Head, then the Beard, then the garment, and then the skirt of the garment down to the ground. Until everything is covered and everything is permeated, so that in the whole New Creation under the New Covenant God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). The Psalm ends with "life for evermore." It can also be translated differently: "There the LORD commands the blessing, namely the Life that is hidden."
It says "olam," and that means just as much as "for evermore." "Olam" literally means: something that is unknown, undetermined or hidden. Hence it is translated as "for evermore," for then it is understood as an undetermined time. That is a misunderstanding. Some translate "olam" – the Greek "aion" – as undetermined time. That is wrong, for it is exactly the opposite. It is a determined time. Here it is an undetermined or hidden Life. Another Life, namely eternal life that is unknown, hidden. It is not an indication of life of which it is unknown how long it lasts. It is of course everlasting and it is different. The word does not only say something about the duration of that life, but it says something about the quality of that Life, namely the blessing that the LORD gives.
Finally we come back to the sundial. Those degrees that went back pointed to that other Life that does not belong to this world. Forty minutes that came from somewhere else. They did not belong, but they were there. The same applies to the fifteen years that Hezekiah would not have but nevertheless received. It is not the life of this world but unknown life. It is namely the life that is in Christ.
Amen